

INDIA

Statement made by the Minister of External Affairs of India on
21 May 1974 on the peaceful underground nuclear explosion
conducted by the Atomic Energy Commission of India on
18 May 1974

We are very happy to note that the peaceful nuclear experiment which took place on 18 May 1974 represents a step forward on the road to peaceful uses of nuclear energy for the welfare of our people. I would like to congratulate our scientists and others who have made possible this achievement by our country. This experiment is an important landmark in the development of nuclear technology for peaceful and economic uses. We have no intention of developing nuclear weapons.

Indian scientists and technologists have been active in this field for two decades; and it is well-known that already two atomic power plants are supplying nuclear energy into our national power grid for the use of our people. The present experiment is important because it represents our resolve to develop our indigenous resources of energy for the benefit of our people through our own efforts. In performing this scientific test, India has not violated any of her international obligations. We are heartened by the enthusiastic support which we have received in this endeavour from countries of the developing world.

It is singularly unfortunate that the peaceful nature of this nuclear experiment of ours should be misconstrued and misread in Pakistan. Apprehensions aroused in Pakistan are unfounded. We value our commitment under the Simla Agreement to settle all our differences with Pakistan by peaceful and bilateral means. Moreover, both countries have resolved that past policies of confrontation and conflict are banished for ever.

We hope therefore that whatever misconception has arisen in Pakistan about this experiment will be replaced after cool reflection by more objective and realistic assessment. India has always supported development of co-operation amongst countries of this region on the basis of sovereign equality. Pakistan's allegations of hegemonistic designs have no basis at all and are, to say the least, uncharitable.